

R 061140Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3234
INFO WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC
SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
DIA WASHINGTON DC
CIA WASHINGTON DC
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
FRG COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USOSCE
HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE
HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE//J5 DIRECTORATE (MC)//
CDRUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE
UDITDUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE

UNCLAS BERLIN 000155

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/PAPD, EUR/PPA, EUR/AGS, INR/EUC, INR/P,
SECDEF FOR USDP/ISA/DSAA, DIA FOR DC-4A

VIENNA FOR CSBM, CSCE, PAA

"PERISHABLE INFORMATION -- DO NOT SERVICE"

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [GM](#) [IZ](#) [US](#) [IS](#) [XF](#) [FR](#) [VT](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ, GUANTANAMO, MSC, ISRAEL, ECONOMY,
ENERGY, HEALTHCARE, VATICAN

- [1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary
- [1](#)2. Iraqi Reconstruction
- [1](#)3. Fate Of Guantnamo Detainees
- [1](#)4. Munich Security Conference
- [1](#)5. Upcoming Israeli Elections
- [1](#)6. U.S. Economy -- Protectionism
- [1](#)7. Sarkozy Speech
- [1](#)8. Nuclear Energy
- [1](#)9. U.S. Healthcare Insurance
- [1](#)10. Vatican Controversy

[1](#)1. Lead Stories Summary

Editorials focused Deutsche Bank's earnings in the fourth quarter of 2008, Sweden's decision to reverse its decision to phase out nuclear energy, and the debate over the Pope's policy towards conservative bishops. ZDF-TV's early evening newscast Heute opened with a report on the earnings of Deutsche Bank, while ARD-TV's early evening newscast Tagesschau opened with a story on the debate in the Committee on a Reform of Federal Affairs over how to limit debt.

[1](#)2. Iraqi Reconstruction

Stuttgarter Zeitung observed: "What Iraq needs most now are investments and reconstruction assistance, which is distributed in a way that avoids using 50 percent for unclear projects. The infrastructure is still broken, and the labor market primarily exists as a shadow economy. The new U.S. government has now indicated that it pins its hopes also on German assistance. The government in Berlin will have to approve this request, because the United States has returned to a reasonable and coordinated policy in Iraq. In Washington, Foreign Minister Steinmeier has announced that Germany would help in the education and healthcare sector."

[1](#)3. Fate Of Guantnamo Detainees

Regional daily Fraenkischer Tag of Bamberg opined: "There is no question that the United States bears primarily responsibility for Guantnamo. Nevertheless, Europe should not simply ignore this problem. EU member states that have accused the United States for years of having violated human rights in Guantnamo must now do justice to their former claims. Innocent people have the right to

asylum in Europe."

14. Munich Security Conference

Under the headline "Return to Diplomacy," Handelsblatt noted in a feature on the Security Conference that "the U.S. government makes a stand in Munich and readjusts its foreign policy." The report adds: "The visit of the senior delegation from Washington is the first opportunity for Germans and other Europeans to make contact with the new U.S. administration. The hope for an improved transatlantic relationship, which President Obama apparently wants, is enormous. The complete array of international conflicts will therefore be readjusted at the Munich Security Conference."

Frankfurter Rundschau stated: "In 2003, the rift between the U.S. and important European countries widened. Six years later, everything is pointing towards building bridges."

15. Upcoming Israeli Elections

Under the headline "The Friends of War will welcome Netanyahu's election victory," Berliner Zeitung analyzed: "The conflict with the Palestinians had an impact on all elections in the last three decades. The Gaza War will tip the scales on Tuesday. Likud head Netanyahu is making a political comeback.... The policy towards the Palestinians, not social and economic issues, will decide the elections, but. The 1993 Oslo peace accord only changed the negative image of the Palestinians in Israel for a short time.... The current events solidified this gloomy image.... Benjamin Netanyahu complains that the Gaza war was stopped too early. He wants to oust Hamas."

16. U.S. Economy -- Protectionism

Under the headline: "Spiderman Obama," Handelsblatt judged: "In principle, Barack Obama has realized that the 'buy American' clause violates global trade treaties and can cause a global wave of protectionism. But the real issue is to quickly stop the rapid decline of the United States by using an enormous amount of money. 'Buy American' is only a side aspect. In order to eliminate this clause, Obama will not risk of getting entangled in the spider web of partisan policies."

die tageszeitung argued that the fear of a new era of protectionism is exaggerated, and argued: "The WTO treaties will prevent tariff borders from going down - and this is something even the United States does not want. President Obama is primarily interested in effectively stimulating the economy. In reality, the fans of free trade are on the retreat. They must witness that the parallel liberalization of the markets for capital and goods does not automatically produce greater wealth or reduced susceptibility to crises. Now they are calling for the U.S. government to take the lead in the fight against the economic crisis. But the United States also feels the disadvantages of globalization. In the outrage against Obama's 'buy American' policy, the disappointment of globalization supporters seems to come to the fore."

Mitteldeutsche Zeitung of Halle noted: "The issue has not been settled with the U.S. giving up the 'buy American' clause. Everywhere in the world, governments are busy supporting their national economies. The transition between national economic stimuli packages and a dangerous sealing off of their economies is pervasive. When the United States saves Chrysler and General Motors from going bankrupt by subsidizing the companies with billions of dollars, then car producers in other countries are put at a disadvantage. A race for subsidies is looming when governments spend billions of euros in taxpayers' money. But in the end, all sides will only lose."

17. Sarkozy Speech

S|ddeutsche commented: "Prior to his election, Sarkozy promised people who work more will have more money in their pockets. The popularity of the president is now falling. There are no star roles to be played on the international stage, with which Sarkozy could cover up his difficulties at home. He no longer speaks for the EU, and the whole world is looking towards the new man in Washington. The left speaks of a looming social tsunami and calls for increasing

consumer spending. But this would further increase France's chronic deficit. Sarkozy is therefore right to give priority to the reform program. His government has come up with a number of immediate attractive measures: Cathedrals and universities will be refurbished. However, the larger important infrastructure programs, like improving the streets and railroads, take more time."

18. Nuclear Energy

Deutschlandfunk commented: "New reasons that nuclear energy can act as a carrier of hope are not in sight. Despite all promises, new problems must be added to old blunders and problems. The Achilles heel of nuclear energy is not security but the final disposal of nuclear waste. This problem has not been resolved anywhere in the world. That is why it is a risky game to invest in new energy plants. All indications are that a return to nuclear energy is also risky because uranium is scarce and expensive even today, while [the development] of renewable energies is progressing rapidly."

According to Frankfurter Allgemeine, "Sweden's decision to return will isolate Germany's Social Democrats and the Greens. In times of climate protection, the situation has totally changed. All around Germany, operating times for nuclear power plants are being extended and new power plants are being ordered."

Sueddeutsche Zeitung editorialized: "On Thursday, the nuclear lobby achieved a resounding victory in Stockholm. For the opponents of nuclear energy, especially the ones in Germany, this is a bitter defeat. Why is Sweden now reversing its decision, even though it is thinly populated, has powerful rivers, enormous forests, and windy coastlines that offer enough opportunities for the generation of alternative energies? Because it has never seriously tried it. Sweden merely talked loudly about the abolishment of nuclear energy, but this decision has never really been implemented. This is bad news, because a radical rethinking would be necessary in energy policy."

"The decision of the Swedish government to lift the ban on the construction of new nuclear power plants does not mean a renaissance of nuclear energy," die tageszeitung opined, and added: "The wishy-washy decision to replace nuclear energy once a good replacement is available meant in reality that the real phasing out of nuclear energy was postponed to never-never day. We should be grateful that the Reinfeldt government is now creating clarity. The parties must now show their true colors before the next elections."

19. U.S. Healthcare Insurance

Regional daily N|rnberger Nachrichten noted: "Before the end of last year, when President Obama's predecessor George W. Bush thwarted a bill of a healthcare insurance for children, people in the U.S. were outdated about this decision. The cold reasoning of the alleged 'compassionate conservatism' was that there were no funds available in the budget. Bush's wars, however, continue to burden the budget. Nevertheless, there should and there must be enough funds available for repairing urgent social problems. [Obama's step] demonstrates a sense of responsibility which would also be good for politicians elsewhere who focus their attention only on bailout packages for banks and companies."

10. Vatican Controversy

Regional daily Nordbayerischer Kurier of Bayreuth opined: "The Vatican, which is otherwise a master in presenting its own cause, has remarkably exposed itself in the case of Holocaust denier Richard Williamson. It is simply not enough to try to change the storm of protests with a short statement into a mild response. It is up to the Pope to say something, but he keeps quiet. Benedict is silent at a time, when the world requires a clear statement. Nothing could characterize the detached seclusion of the Church leader better."

Kieler Nachrichten argued: "The Pope is shocked at the chancellor. The Central Council of Jews no longer believes in what the Pope says. The chancellor is now saying that the Vatican's call to Williamson to recant his views on the Holocaust is good signal. This is a beginning. For more than two weeks now, the Vatican and

the German government, the Jews and the Catholics have been talking at cross purposes. But enough is enough. The Pope wanted to reconcile and not divide. His gesture aimed at the opponents of the Second Vatican Council, but was not aimed at the deniers of the Holocaust. The chancellor totally misunderstood Benedict's motivation. Merkel made a mistake and she should admit to having made a mistake. It is time to return to reason - on all sides involved."

KOENIG